

# COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR CHURCH ABOUT COVID-19:

## *Faithful Preparedness, not Fearful Panic*

### COMMUNICATION IS ESSENTIAL

Communication is essential to helping your church prepare and respond to COVID-19. Your church should be intentional in providing regular updates. Below are tips you can choose from to help you communicate faithful preparedness, not fearful panic.

*Begin messaging with prayer, Scripture, and hope.*

- Specifically reach out to vulnerable and special populations in your church.
- Share what you do or don't know at the time of the communication.
- Stick to the facts and only share trusted and vetted information.
- Don't be tempted to share hearsay, rumors, or what you cannot verify.
- Include information about possible resources for assistance.
- Discuss when and where services will or won't take place because of COVID-19.
- Share what the church leadership and congregation is doing to address COVID-19.
- Note the tough questions and decisions your church leadership are working on.
- Outline the steps your church leaders are taking to keep members safe.
- Discuss how decisions are being made by your church leadership.
- Point to resources and organizations you may be consulting informing your efforts.
- Explicitly highlight the possible benefits and importance of each major decision.
- Acknowledge concerns, doubts, and sadness modifications and adaptations may cause.
- Remember that you will likely have some people in your church who are feeling extremely anxious, some who think the response is an over-reaction, and many people who are in between.
- Offer hopeful and realistic alternatives when ministry approaches change.
- Provide concrete and tangible suggestions for how individuals and families can prepare.
- Address members' holistic needs (spiritual, physical, emotional, social, safety).
- Also share how members can communicate and stay in touch with church leadership.
- Note how and when church leadership will remain in communication with members.
- Let members know when to expect the next communication if possible.
- End messages by mentioning your leadership team's diligence amidst COVID-19.

*Conclude messaging with prayer, Scripture, and hope.*

### Contributors:

Jamie Aten, Ph.D.

Kent Annan, M.Div.

### CONTACTS & UPDATES

HDI's website and social media accounts provide ongoing updates and resources for preparing your church for COVID-19.

Email: [hdi@wheaton.edu](mailto:hdi@wheaton.edu)  
Facebook: [facebook.com/WheatonHDI](https://www.facebook.com/WheatonHDI)

Twitter: [twitter.com/WheatonHDI](https://twitter.com/WheatonHDI)

Instagram: [@wheaton\\_hdi](https://www.instagram.com/wheaton_hdi)